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The Norfolk

Natterjack

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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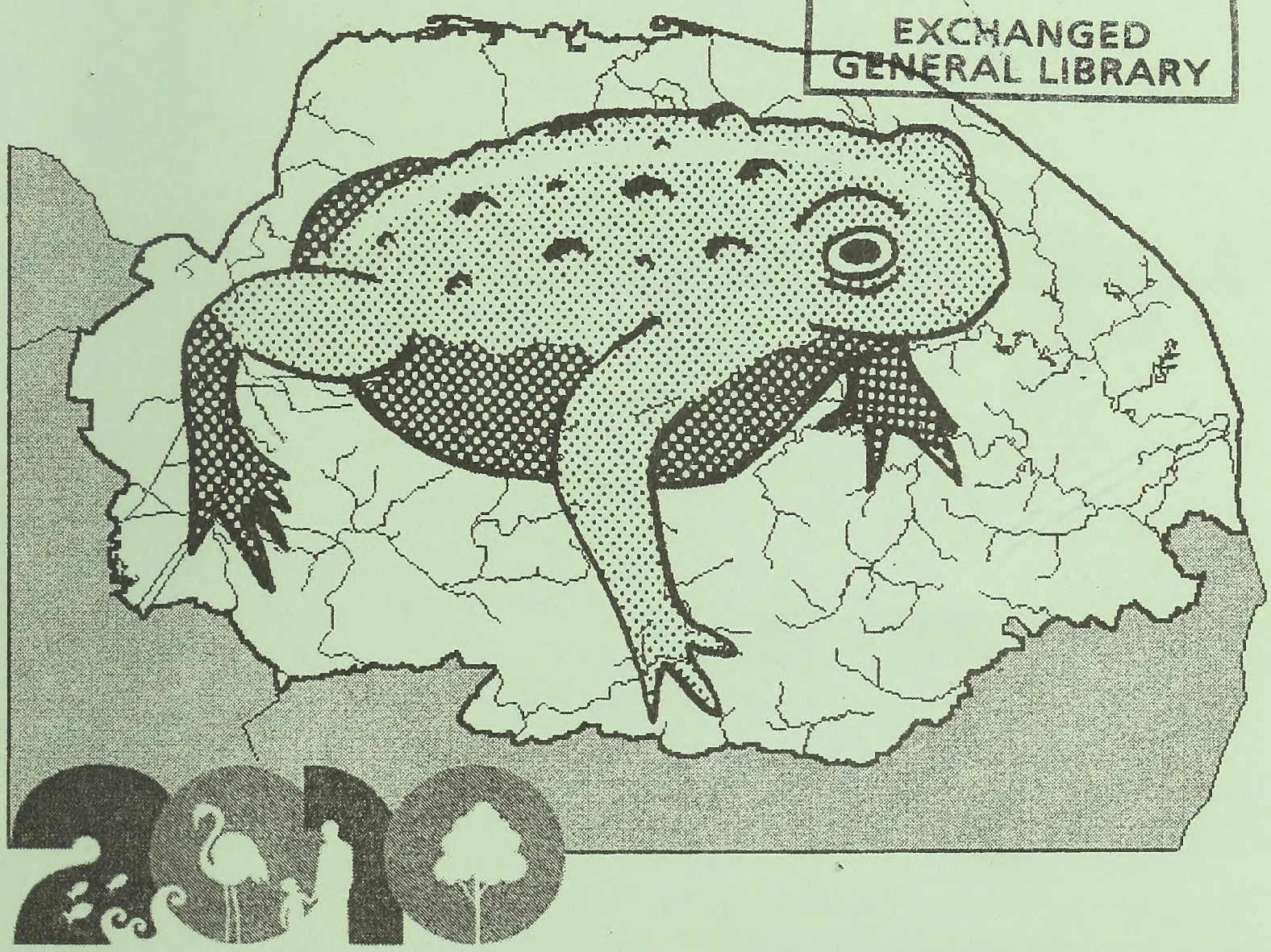

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Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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These have been formed to bring together those interested in studying particular groups. They are not part of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society but have aims which are similar to those of the Society.

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Articles with the camera symbol have associated photographs in the Nats' Gallery (centre pages)

Toad-in-the-hole....

A hard winter and late spring but as I write this towards the end of April Swallows and at least six species of butterfly are on the wing and the bramble patch is occupied by the Whitethroat so it looks as if everything is getting back to normal. I am sure the hard winter will have been beneficial to many hibernating insects. Some insects, however, are not so welcome and one of these, the Harlequin Ladybird I have noted in three areas of Beeston Regis and Sheringham Commons recently.

My thanks to all contributors and photographers. Please keep sending in your observations and if you haven't written before let's hear from you.

FF

Spring is here

Tony Howes

By the middle of March new life is beginning to stir in the natural world, the birds are singing and nest building, ready to start another round of rearing youngsters. Buds on bushes and trees are swelling, ready to burst into a sea of vivid green, it is the season of great promise, of good and beautiful things to come.

The growling calls of Great Crested Grebes echo across the lakes and waterways, the courtship of these lovely birds is a joy to behold. So elegant and graceful, with their crests and ruffs spread wide they rise breast to breast and move their heads from side to side, some times with strands of weed held in their bills.

The jingly song of Reed Buntings can be heard across fen and water meadows, the cock birds perched atop a bush or reed stem, their black heads and white collars very prominent.

Greylag Geese are very noisy at this time, having verbal fisticuffs with one another as they jockey for possession of mates and prime nesting sites. All nature is on the move, Spring has sprung. I for one will be out enjoying this wondrous bounty.

Busy Bees

Robert Maidstone

Now I'm a lazy gardener especially when it comes to routine chores like watering, a task to be avoided if possible, so when I moved into my new bungalow I looked for a site for my courgette bed. Near to the back door so I don't have to carry bowls of washing up water too far would have been ideal but the extensive concrete drive and poorly maintained garden hampered this prospect. So I opted for the laziest place.

First I dug a small plot 2 feet by four feet outside the kitchen window then cut the outflow pipe from the sink off a few inches above the drain, added a bend and new length of pipe and, hey presto!, I had my new courgette bed which would be watered each time I washed up or dribbled water down the sink plug-hole.

A few days later while I was doing the washing up I noticed a few bees circling around the damp patch where the sink water now dribbled out onto the garden. "Cor! Honey bees", I thought. (I had accumulated a few empty honey jars and was getting low on my stock of full honey jars, so was on the look out for a local bee-keeper.). Since the weather had been dry I assumed the bees were coming to suck moisture out of the damp soil and take back to the hive, but after a few minutes I began to doubt my initial thought that they were honey bees as they looked slightly larger and bulkier.

I abandoned the washing up and popped outside. In the hole made by the rushing water when I pulled out the sink plug was a bee with a thick coat of orange hair, slightly larger than a normal honey bee with a proportionately larger shiny head. As I crept nearer it turned round, rearranged its grip on a ball of clay it had in its jaws and flew off.

The large head and orange hairs enabled me to identify it as one of the solitary bees of the genus *Osmia*, probably *O. rufa*, the commonest of the genus. These bees, my books said, used clay to build cells in holes in any solid material wood, soil or walls even using the key hole of an unused mortise lock to access the internal cavity. Depending on the size of the hole the female may build a variable number of cells, an old bolt hole may have four or five whilst the lock had over fifty.

Each cell is filled with pollen on which an egg is laid, the larva on hatching feeds on this pollen. Since these bees are normally seen in spring it may be reasonable to assume that the larvae feed over the summer and autumn pupating in late winter to hatch in spring. This long period of pupating would mean that all the pupae would hatch at more or less the same time, or possibly the outer ones feeling the warmer air of spring hatch first thus allowing those further back in the hole to feel the warmth and follow. In any case the nest holes are usually sufficiently well camouflaged that they are seldom found and studied.

Two new beetles for Norfolk from the Mannington and Wolterton Estates

Robert Coleman

In July 2006 I found an attractive black-and-yellow longhorn beetle in the cottage where I live, close to Mannington Hall. Not recognising the beetle as one I'd seen previously seen I identified it as *Pachytodes cerambyciformis* - the 'Speckled Longhorn Beetle' using Joy (1932) and thought little more about it.

Late last year, a friend of mine who works on the Mannington Estate passed on a photograph that had been taken of a suspected Bee Beetle *Trichius fasciatus* that had been taken at nearby Wolterton Hall in August 2009. Realising this would be an unusual record for the region (the Bee Beetle is normally only found in the north and the west) I forwarded the photos on to the county recorder, Martin Collier. I also took this opportunity to pass on a number of records I had accumulated over the previous three years.

Martin suspected our 'Bee Beetle' might not be the native species, but the very similar *T. rosaceus* (which is recorded as 'doubtfully British' and occurs on the Continent) and passed the record on to the Natural History Museum to attempt to get an identification verified. The sighting was also posted on the Open University's iSpot website (www.ispot.org.uk/node/5169) and drew some interesting comments there.

Despite the excellent photographs, (by 12 year old Tobias Parke), the NHM's 'chafer experts' were unable to reach a clear consensus over the beetles' identity. Unfortunately a key feature (a spine on the middle leg of the beast which would be present in *T. fasciatus*) cannot be seen. It would seem the most likely explanation would be that this record is one of an accidentally imported *T. rosaceus* rather than a wayward *T. fasciatus*. The surrounding habitat at Wolterton contains a number of old trees, the larval habitat of both species, so it is just conceivable an overlooked breeding population occurs in the area. Either species would be a new record for Norfolk.

Further to my correspondence with Martin, he picked out my record of *Pachytodes cerambyciformis* from the previous year for further scrutiny, and was able to confirm my identification from a photo. Once again this proved to be a highly unusual record – this species, whilst common in the north and west, is entirely absent from East Anglia and was a first Norfolk record. In this instance too, human intervention cannot be ruled out as the larvae of these longhorns live in (potentially transportable) dead wood. However, given the

time of year, there would be no firewood in the house (and all my wood is sourced locally anyway). Again, a tantalising possibility of an undetected population of the species in the vicinity; to be investigated in the summer!

DARTFORD WARBLERS

Tony Howes

Dunwich heath in Suffolk was the destination on this glorious Spring morning, the weather forecast was good, no rain or strong winds, we had in mind Dartford Warblers. In recent years numbers of these delightful little birds have been increasing, and the heath land of Dunwich is known as one of the strong-holds for them. The gorse bushes, as always, were a blaze of golden flowers on bright green foliage. However the heather in March looked very drab, all dead and brown. But it was here that we found the first pair of Dartfords, scanning with the binoculars soon picked out the little brown bird on the topmost sprig of dead heather. After much moving around we had seen probably six different birds, one carrying a feather, obviously in the throes of nest making, we managed a few photographs before we left them in peace.

Also seen as we wandered the heath, was a herd of Red Deer, two Woodcock and a couple of Yellow Hammers. Later, down at Minsmere we came across two adders sunning themselves in a sheltered spot. While having a welcome cup of tea at the restaurant, we had for company a pair of Magpies, they were walking about among the outside tables looking for any scraps of food left by visitors.

A sea fret then called an end to a lovely day, covering the coast with a damp, cold mist rolling in from the ocean.

Wanted Photographic slides, transparencies.

If any one has a stock of surplus or unwanted slides of wildlife, native or not, or garden plants I would be willing to take them rather than you throw them out.

Robert Maidstone tel: 01379 677106 or email: robert@linaria.fsnet.co.uk"

Strumpshaw Diary

Brian Macfarlane

As I write this article the sun has begun to shine with a glimmer of warmth after such a long winter of extreme cold. I have spent many hours in the hide with my hands and feet feeling as if I'm standing in cold sea water. I often wonder why I do it considering what little passes me by. The frozen lakes looked majestic in the watery sunlight, and gave some magic moments occasionally. Unfortunately I was not in the right place at the right time. Only one bonus was an Otter that came out of the water to stand briefly on an island in the snow. You can't win 'em all!

I was in the fen hide (where I usually reside) recently when a chap came in and said " Oh not you here again, they'll start charging you council tax". I said they won't, there aren't any windows in the hide!

In the last *Natterjack* edition I mentioned there had been a decline in the number of birds seen, and unfortunately that is still the case. It is a bit of an in-between season waiting for the migrants to arrive so I shall just have to wait and see if it improves.

It is difficult to ascertain how many Bitterns there are on the reserve. To date I have not heard any booming. I am certain there are 3 at present. Two birds of note that passed over recently were the Hen Harrier (female), and a Red Kite. The Red Kite is still a rare sight in this region, but they are spreading west from Wales in ever increasing numbers.

There has been a family of Otters present for some time, but it would appear that the two youngsters have moved on to find their own territory, so I don't expect to see more than one at a time from now on. Last week two came close to the fen hide and were wrestling with a large eel, (see photo).

The other day I was walking to the fen hide turning when I saw 20 feet away a Mink sitting on a small fence. I managed to get a photo before it shot off. That is not good news as the breeding season is about to begin, and that animal will kill anything for the fun of it! The staff have laid traps so hope they catch it.

I was coming back down the sandy path from the hide when I noticed a Weasel running along in front of me looking for prey. I followed at a distance, and it travelled very fast passing close to a vole which it did not see, luckily, as I was able to get a very quick photo before it disappeared. The Weasel retraced its steps back to the sandy path where it dived into the undergrowth and came out with a mouse in its jaws. My only regret was the terrible lighting conditions which meant a slow shutter speed and not a very sharp picture. It was still worth recording as I have only ever seen one other Weasel in all the years I have been going there. Well I'm now looking forward to the Spring activities, surely my 'birds' will come!

DEER POPULATIONS

Hans Watson

During the last few years there has been debate about the growing numbers of deer, and the problems they cause, together with the possible solutions. It soon becomes apparent when listening to these debates, that matters are far from simple, with different species of deer presenting different considerations in different parts of Britain. Participants in the debate are also influenced by a wide variety of matters, from commercial interests, to garden damage and opposition to animal cruelty. Arguments become polarised into those who want deer culled and those who oppose culling and believe that nature should left to take its course. Those advocating culling have pointed out, that not only has nature already been compromised by the eradication of the natural predators of the deer, but also, when nature does take its natural course, it will reduce populations by starvation and disease. Both of which are likely to cause more suffering than culling, and would probably provoke calls from the anti-cull folk for intervention in the form of providing food and veterinary help.

Here in the broads area, the most obvious deer is the Chinese Water Deer. Looking back through my notes, it is obvious that the last decade has seen a very big increase in their population, and I now expect to see at least one on every walk in the Yare valley. This increase is in spite of the large numbers that are killed by traffic. In March 2009, on a single drive from Acle to Yarmouth, I counted 4 recently killed Water Deer on the roadside. Thankfully this species is not regarded by most naturalists as causing any problems, and may even help in the large reedbeds that many of them occupy.

In North Norfolk, two deer species that are growing in numbers, are the Muntjac and the Roe Deer, both of which can have a detrimental effect on the areas they occupy. Both of these deer can cause problems in woodland areas, both from the point of view of foresters and conservationists. In some areas the population of several woodland warblers has fallen as result of the destruction of bramble and other cover by Roe and Muntjac. On the North Norfolk Heaths where excellent management has taken place in the last few years, I have noticed Roe deer feeding on young birch saplings out on the open areas of the heath. It is possible that by doing this, Roe deer provide a supplement to this management, by preventing re-growth of this invasive tree.

Both pro-cull and anti-cull people, find anyone who is neutral, like myself, a challenge to convert. Some pro-cull folk try the cheeky approach by asking "Do you suffer from the Bambi syndrome" or "Do you like venison?" My answer to the first of these questions is "No", and to the second question "Yes – very much".

NATS' GALLERY: May 2010

Ken Durrant, twice president of our Society and a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society for 50 years, died on April 28th, shortly before his 90th birthday. An obituary will appear in *Transactions* but in the meantime the editor of the *Eastern Daily Press* has kindly given us permission to share this delightful pen portrait with our members – about 20 years ago the *EDP* published this article by Maurice Woods, who had been editor of the *Dereham and Fakenham Times*, Ken's local paper when he was living, working and serving as a magistrate in the Dereham area.

An enthusiast came to call

Until that morning when the young telephone engineer bounced into my office, I had always thought of the insect world in terms of flypaper and derris dust. King Solomon's advice notwithstanding, I had felt no urge to go to the ant, and had made tolerably certain that the ant never came to me. Having to share my native land with about 22,000 different species of creepy-crawly, many of which attacked without provocation, was nothing short of a cosmic injustice.

Ten minutes in the company of this young fellow, who rhapsodised with boundless delight on the way of the beetle and the bug, and I was almost ready to concede that creating creepy-crawlies was the best day's work the Almighty ever did.

He was an enthusiast, and any kind of enthusiast, even an entomological enthusiast, can always infect an eager listener with his enthusiasm. From our very first meeting, when he perched on a corner of my desk, much as a praying mantis used to perch on my telephone when I was on night duty in the tropics, the completeness of his immersion in the affairs of the insect tribe was made abundantly manifest. Take him to the *Folies Bergere*, I thought, and he will

have eyes only for the moths fluttering round the candelabra. Take him to a restaurant, and he will congratulate the waiter if he finds a fly in his soup. He had served in the Army during the war, which had ended only a few years before we met, and the tales he told would have made an old soldier gasp. The more bugs there were in his billet, the better he liked it. Did his respirator case contain a respirator? Presumably it did, but that was not its prime purpose. It had been presented to him by a benevolent War Office to house the hundred and one creepy-crawlies he collected for later classification. Other men might speak of Burma with distaste, but he remembered the jungle as the next best thing to Nirvana. It was a paradise filled with stinging caterpillars and butterflies a foot across. There were also Japanese bullets flying around, but as they did not possess six legs, he failed to notice them.

There is a gap in the records of the Imperial War Museum. They do not tell us how often history stood still while he risked his life to capture some rare specimen. As he recounted such episodes, I could almost hear him asking the colonel to postpone the counter-attack until *Horrificus nasticus* was safely tucked away beside his respirator. He was the happiest soldier alive, though how he remained alive is a mystery. But he was no less happy now that he had returned to civilian life. The meadows of mid-Norfolk were his jungle. Creatures with delightful habits lurked behind every blade of grass.

Much of his time was spent in the pursuit of his trade on the tops of telegraph poles, and the winged horrors which landed there for a breather were his constant joy.

The more I saw of him, the more certain I became that his eyes were microscopes. They would fasten at once on moving specks which eluded my grosser vision. I often wondered whether they could encompass such vast phenomena of the everyday world as buses and trains, or whether he perceived reality as a haze of transparent wings and a shimmer of tiny feet.

There was something so boyish about his zest that I was sure his pockets must be crammed with bits of string, and conkers, and half-chewed toffees. Perhaps they were. This I do know, they were invariably crammed with his six-legged friends. I recall the day when one of his jacket pockets was buzzing like a chain-saw. He dipped into it and fished out a hornet. "Don't worry," he said, "it's a male, and males don't sting."

By the time our brief acquaintance ended, my work having snatched me away from Norfolk, he had all but convinced me that insects were superior to the human race. Long before mankind existed, they had equipped themselves with saws, drills, hypodermic needles, tools of every kind. They had perfected

the manufacture of chemicals and the growing of crops. They had solved the problem of achieving a stable economy, a feat no human politician has yet accomplished.

Yes, I hear you murmur, but who was this fervent youth? Naturalists among you will have guessed already. He was Ken Durrant, Norfolk's very own authority on the insect world, now living in retirement at Sheringham. Almost 40 years on, I renewed our acquaintance the other day. He was nursemaiding his emperor moths at the time. He may be a grandfather 11 times over but his voice still bubbles with boyish zeal [Ed – there were to be two further grandchildren and later four great-grandchildren]. Let him regale you with the life story of the cuckoo wasp, and you will understand why his mates in the Army allowed him to drag them off in search of bugs when they would rather have been searching for the nearest pub. And I am willing wager that he would still home in on a needle in a haystack, so long as that needle had six legs, a head, a thorax and an abdomen.

Two new beetles for Norfolk. Above: The attractive black-and-yellow longhorn beetle ***Pachytodes cerambyciformis,*** Mannington Hall, July 2006 (*photo*: Rob Coleman). B**ee beetle**, probably ***Trichius rosaceus,*** at Wolterton Hall in July 2009 (*photo:* Tobias Parke). See article.

Although primarily a bird reserve, Strumpshaw Fen offers good opportunities to study mammals. Left: **Mink**; below: **Weasel**, **Weasel** with vole, **Otter** with Eel and **Otter** in the snow. See article. *Photos:* Brian Macfarlane.

Snowdrops at Little Walsingham. Not a native species, but well-naturalised in many places, sometimes spectacularly so. See article. *Photo:* Brian MacFarlane.

Dartford Warbler at Dunwich Heath, Suffolk. This delightful warbler expanded its range greatly in the 1990s and 2000s, even reaching the North Norfolk coast, but a cold snap in the winter 2008-2009 decimated some populations in southern England. The effects of the hard weather in 2009-2010 are only now becoming apparent. See article. *Photo:* Tony Howes.

Deer in Norfolk. Undoubtedly on the increase, but do you suffer from the Bambi syndrome or do you like venison? Top to bottom: Chinese Water Deer, Muntjac, Roe. See article. *Photos:* Hans Watson.

Spring is here! Great Crested Grebes in courtship display (above) and a fine study of a male Reed Bunting in song. It has not yet achieved the strikingly black-and-white head pattern of full breeding plumage – males undergo a partial moult in the late winter, replacing the feathers of the head and throat. See article. *Photos:* Tony Howes.

Tideline Corpses at Brancaster A very high tide on 29 November 2010. produced below, **Ray's Bream,** right a **squid *Loligo* sp.**, probably ***L. forbesii*.** *Photos:* Margaret How.

Greater Chickweed, Edgefield, May 2010. One of several Norfolk plants that have a primarily western distribution in Britain. Rather similar to the ubiquitous Common Chickweed, it averages a little larger in all parts, although unhelpfully, Common Chickweed can be as large. The seed capsules, held pointing downwards on ramrod-straight stalks, are a good clue, but identification can only be confirmed by counting the stamens: there are usually 10 in Greater Chickweed, compared to 3, 5, or less commonly 7-8 in Common Chickweed. The anthers are rose-pink, but once they have burst to shed the pollen, become a dingy brown-black. *Photo:* Simon Harrap/ norfolknature.co.uk.

The Mysterious Death of a Deer

John Vincent

A short while back, my son, in his late 40s, was on holiday from South Africa. In the course of walks to re-acquaint himself with the environs of his youth he came across the remains of a medium-sized mammal, in an advanced state of putrefaction, on a verge near Edingthorpe church. He twisted off what remained of the skull from the weathered, dried and distorted upper body pelt. It lacked eyes ears and lower jaw but I was able to identify it as a male Chinese Water Deer from the 6 cm long curved canines (tusks).

He took me to the site which I worked over carefully with a hand garden fork, collecting skin and hair liberally scattered around. The hair was, in the main long (5 cm), stiffish, white in the basal half and brown above. This was probably the winter coat; I am familiar only with the shorter, softer, red-brown summer coat. There were no backbone, tail, ribs, leg bones, hooves or lower jaw.

So how to interpret these facts? If the animal died of natural causes I would expect it to have done so in a quiet secluded spot under cover, where any scavenger would have consumed it rather than dragging it into the open for competitors to take advantage. The open site where the corpse was found is certainly not a natural ambush site so what did kill it, how did it kill it and what consumed it so thoroughly? Foxes and Badgers frequent the area, and occasionally domestic dogs, not under control are seen here, but could any of these animals have brought down a wary adult Chinese Water Deer – and so thoroughly consumed the carcase?

There have been recent reports of a large cat (Puma or Panther) in this area. Could such a beast have killed and eaten the deer? I maintain an open mind.

I still have the dried carcase and if anyone would like to view it and follow up the investigation I will do whatever I can to assist them.

Watch the birdie.... Difficult at times!

MW. Freer

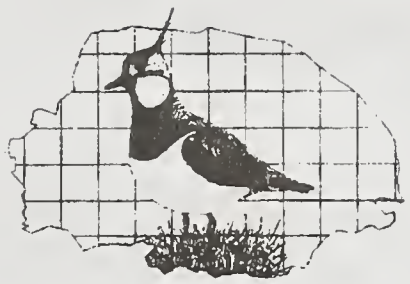
In the last '*Natterjack*' (February 2010), Brian MacFarlane mentions that he and a group of photographers meet regularly on Tuesdays in Fen Hide, Strumpshaw. How many in the group? And do they fill it to the exclusion of others? This is what has been happening on Fridays (certainly) and probably other days of the week too.

Do they arrive before reception opens – thus they don't have to book in – and stay all day? Are their camera lenses so enormous that they project beyond the hide by a foot or so? If you are lucky enough to get a seat in Fen Hide on Fridays for a half-an-hours bird watching you may be unlucky enough to find yourselves between a pair of these giant cameras and thus incapable of seeing either left or right.

The Hawk and Owl Trust at Sculthorpe has a similar problem with photographers hogging a hide all day and there's a poster asking photographers to vacate their position should it be clear that other visitors can't find a seat.

The problem at Strumpshaw following several representations to the RSPB has recently (April 2010) also resulted in a notice asking anyone whose occupancy exceeds 15 minutes to vacate the hide if it is full and others are waiting to enter or sit down. The RSPB is to be congratulated with the speed and diplomacy it has addressed the problem of long term occupancy by photographers.

(This is a obviously a problem with the different requirements of the long-stay photographers and short-stay birders for the use of the hide. Brian MacFarlane acknowledges that over the past few months, since Otters moved in, there has been a huge influx of people (an increase on a scale not seen in the last 30 years that he has been going there). He also expects people numbers will fall when the Otters disperse. Of course the wonderful and exciting pictures in '*Natterjack*' and the many other publications would not be there if it wasn't for the dedication and determination of the photographers who have to endure many long hours without any great activity. Maybe the answer is long-stay and short-stay seating in busy periods as 15 minutes does not seem a sufficient period in which to watch wildlife let alone take a picture. Of course another or extended hide might just be the answer, especially if people numbers continue to increase – Ed.)



NORFOLK BIRD ATLAS

Unfortunately, unavoidable delays in completing the text and maps for the Norfolk Bird Atlas meant that publication was not possible last year, as was originally planned. However the book is to be published in early autumn 2010 by the BTO, probably as the first in a series of county bird atlases. The price is likely to be in the region of £40-45.

It is hoped to have a book launch at the BTO headquarters at The Nunnery in Thetford at which most of the original vignettes used in the book will be exhibited and many of them will be on sale. Invitations to the book launch will be sent to all artists, fieldworkers and others who have contributed to the project.

Moss Taylor

Kelling Heath

This wonderful area of natural beauty and wildlife is part of the North Norfolk Coastal heathlands and has been given a virtual makeover. Nick Owens and John Wagstaff have collated records and images and with the assistance of webmaster Max Garrett created a website dedicated to the wildlife of Kelling Heath:

http://www.kellingheathwildlife.org.uk

The website explores the geology and recent history, conservation management and the wildlife throughout this fascinating area. There are means for visitors to add to the diverse wildlife records by sending in records or photographs and a comprehensive image gallery to aid identification. If stuck in on a wet day have a look at the site and 'sense' the heady smell of gorse in flower and the sun on your back as you progress through the informative pages!

A visit to Little Walsingham

Brian MacFarlane

My wife Thelma and I have lived in Norfolk for over 50 years, and had never gone to see the Snowdrops at Little Walsingham. There always seems to be an excuse for not getting round to it, like the bad winter of '63 and so on.

This year Thelma said she wanted to go on her birthday in February for a treat. When I rang the office at Walsingham to find out the opening times the lady said you can't come yet because we have 'joined up' Snowdrops, (what she really meant was there was 3" of snow covering them!). So we had to wait another couple of weeks.

I remember it well because I was sitting in the hide at Strumpshaw thinking it was a beautiful day with a perfect blue sky. I had been there 3 hours when it suddenly occurred to me this would be a good day to go to Walsingham. I sped home and we set off to arrive about midday. We paid our dues and went out into the grounds. At first you come to what I would call a large sized vegetable patch with Snowdrops dotted around. I thought this was hardly much to write home about, but once we had walked through that area it was apparent there was much more to come.

We walked through an arch in a high hedge, and were immediately faced with wall-to-wall carpeting of snow with a difference. The sight of Snowdrops as far as the eye could see was just breath taking in the dappled sunlight. The river running through the estate had swollen with all that snow and had overflowed it's banks in places covering many hundreds of plants.

That visit left me with a lasting memory of nature in all it's finest GLORY. If you have never been then don't leave it 50 years like us before you go. 'You know it makes sense'.

Encounters with the public (2)

Sylvia Fairhead

I was amused by Colin Jacobs tales 'Encounters with the public'. It brought back some memories of my own…..!

While staying on a campsite in Yorkshire many years ago I was busy trying to get a photograph of a Pine Moth on a frosted glass window when I noticed people stopping to watch. A man entered the building and on his way out he asked what I was doing and told me I was taking photographs at the men's loo – was my face red! I was so engrossed by that moth that I just didn't realise where I was.

The next one happened at a Norfolk camp site. I was taking photographs of a large number of hibernating ladybirds in the top corner of a doorway. (Yes you've guessed) it was a gents loo again. This time I knew I was safe as the camp site was empty.

RESEARCH

Round-up

The following meetings/dates have been arranged:-

Saturday **May 8th** venue tba;

Thursday **June 10th** Little Ouse; meeting place tba.

Saturday **July 17th** East Ruston Common joint Society meeting – roadside parking at map ref. TG 346282;

Thursday **August 12th** venue tba;

Saturday **September 11th** Booton Common – meet initially at Booton Church at map ref. TG1222223;

Thursday **October 14th** venue tba.

All meetings start at 10.30 am.

All are welcome. Please contact either Bob Ellis or myself for further information. (Contact details in the front of '*Natterjack*')

Mary Ghullam
Research committee secretary

Volume XVII (Part 2)

Flora and Fauna of Norfolk

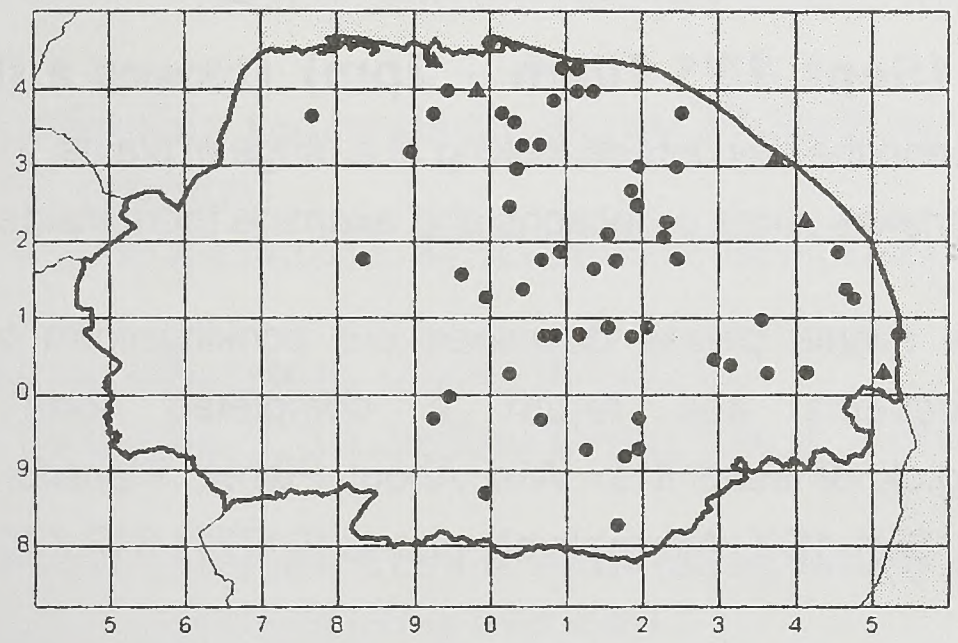
Miscellaneous Observations

Compiled by E.A. Ellis

DEATH'S HEAD HAWK MOTHS. The year 1950 was out-standing for the large number of *Acherontia atropos* (L.) noticed in Norfolk during the late summer and autumn. 326 were recorded from 64 different localities. No reports of the occurance of these insects were received from the King's Lynn district, nor from anywhere in the county west of a line drawn through Docking, West Laxham and Thompson. Most of the specimens were larvae and pupae dug up in potato fields. Several larvae were reported feeding on cabbages and some certainly continued to do so in captivity. Thirteen larvae at Thompson were taken from false tea tree (*Lycium chinense*); one at Brinton was found on woody Nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*) and one at Reedham on runner beans. Most of the larvae were of the usual yellow-green form; a few were more greenish or more yellowish than the average. Several brown larvae were found, including seven at Thompson with zig-zag stripes running lengthwise down their backs. Larvae, pupae and imagines were heard squeaking in several instances, but the squeaks were seldom repeated. Many pupae were "forced" by Norfolk entomologists, three or four weeks generally elapsing between pupation and emergence when the pupae were subjected to fairly high temperatures (70°F. and over) and a damp atmosphere. Some pupae were found to be still alive at the end of January and it remains to be seen whether there will be a natural emergence of a percentage of the moths in Spring. A summary of records supplied by members of this Society and others is given below. One imago was found at each locality marked with an asterisk.

(R. M. BARNES)

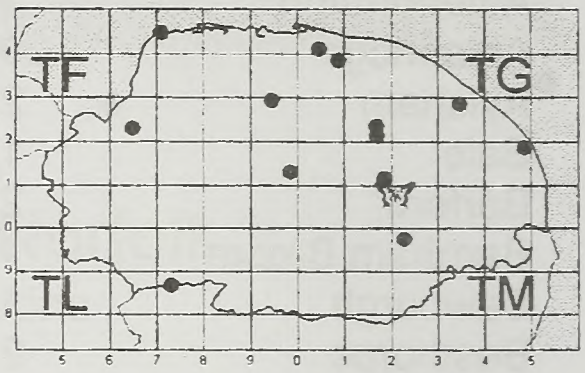
Attleborough	1
Attlebridge	29
Aylsham	2
Bale	1
Barford	2
Barnham Broom	1
Bawburgh	1
Besthorpe	2
*Binham	8
Bodham	1
Bramerton	3
Brandon Parva	2
Brinton	1
Briston	1
Bunwall	1
Burlingham	1
Buxton	11
Colney	6
Dickleburgh	1
Docking	1
East Dereham	2
East Harling	1
Felmingham	1
Felthorpe	10
Filby	1
Foulsham	19
Frettenham	1
*Gorleston	1
Great Yarmouth	1
*Lightship off Yarmouth	1
Gressenhall	1
Griston	1
*Happisburgh	1
Haveringland	7
Hellington	1
*Hickling	1
Hindolveston	50
Hingham	1
Holt	9
Ingworth	6
Kelling	1
Langley	1
Lenwade	3
Long Stratton	1
Lyng	1
Marsham	9
Martham	1
Mautby	4
Melton Constable	4
North Tuddenham	1
Norwich	6
Reedham	1
Sculthorpe	4
Southrepps	2
Stratton Strawless	22
Tasburgh	1
Thompson	14
Wacton	1
Walsingham	1
*Wells	31
West Beckham	2
West Lexham	1
Weybourne	4
Wighton	18



The distribution map produced using DMAP shows the larvae (dot) or where a single imago (triangle) was observed based on the localities listed in the 1950 paper.

Excursion Reports

2010-11 Field Meeting location St. Andrew's Hall Eaton Indoor meetings



A total of 13 excursions and numerous workshops are planned for 2010/2011. Please try to support them and send in a report of the day so others can see what they have missed!

PlantLife Events

Join Plantlife's Tim Pankhurst at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Redgrave and Lopham Fen to discover the wonderful plants of the fens. You will learn about some of the threats facing the fens and how Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Plantlife are helping to conserve this special habitat. These events are open to those 18 and over. Twenty places are available for each event. You should wear clothing and footwear suitable for the outdoors and be comfortable walking over rough ground. These events are suitable for those with little or basic knowledge about wild plants.

Plants of the fens (June 21st 10 am - 3pm) You will be able to practice your identification skills and will be introduced to 50 species of plants.

Aquatics in detail (July 12th 10am - 3pm) Learn about the fascinating aquatic and marginal plants that inhabit fens and their strategies for survival.

Autumn on the fen (Sept 23rd 10am - 2pm) Following a short introduction in the morning spend the day outside looking at a range of plants. In the case of bad weather we will makes some collections and examine them inside.

To book any of the above events please download our booking form from www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/events and return a completed form to wildaboutplants@plantlife.org.uk or send it to Wild About Plants, Plantlife, 14 Rollestone Street, Salisbury, SP1 1DX. Alternatively phone (01722) 342 730 for more information.

The next issue of ***'The Norfolk Natterjack'*** will be August 2010. Please send all articles and notes to the editor as soon as possible by **July 1st 2010** to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8QD Email: francis.f@virgin.net

Please send all photographic material to:
Simon Harrap, 1 Norwich Road, Edgefield,
Melton Constable, Norfolk, NR22 2RP Email: harrap@onetel.net

Membership subscriptions

The N&NNS membership year runs from 1st April to 31st March. During this time members will receive four copies of the quarterly *Natterjack* newsletter, and annual copies of the Transactions of the Society, and the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report.

Membership renewals are due on ***1st April each year*** and should be sent to the treasurer:

- David Richmond, 42 Richmond Rise, Reepham, Norfolk, NR10 4LS.

New memberships should be sent to:

- David Paull, 8 Lindford Drive, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6LT.

Current rates are £15 for individual, family and group memberships (£25 for individuals living overseas).
Cheques payable to: ***Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society.***

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